

Report of the Workshop on ‘Muslim Diaspora: Prospects and Challenges for Global Peace and Prosperity’

12-13 MAY 2018, Istanbul, Turkey

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1. BACKGROUND

- A. The Workshop on ‘Muslim Diaspora: Prospects and Challenges for Global Peace and Prosperity’ was held on 12-13 May 2018 in Istanbul, Turkey. The workshop was organized by The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) in collaboration with the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB).
- B. The workshop was convened in pursuant of Resolution No. 1/44-MM “On Safeguarding the Rights of Muslim Communities and Minorities in non-OIC Member States” which was adopted by the 44th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held in Abidjan, Republic of Côte d’Ivoire on 10-11 July 2017. The Resolution emphasizes the need to respect the rights of Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC Member States, and stresses the importance of continued coordination between the OIC Member States in order to find ways to assist them to solve their problems, protect their religious, cultural, civil, political and economic rights, and preserve their Islamic identity.
- C. The key objective of the workshop was to explore the collaboration opportunities among Diaspora Authorities of the OIC Member Countries that are in charge of the citizens living abroad. The Workshop gathered information on policies and works done by the OIC Member States on Diasporic communities to improve their overall economic, social, and political well-being and enhance their success including their contributions, both in the host countries and the countries of origin.

2. ORGANIZATION

- A. The Workshop was attended by representatives of governments from key diaspora authorities of OIC Member States, representatives of regional, international and OIC institutions, academia as well as NGOs and Civil Society Organisations.

OIC Member States:

1. Afghanistan
2. Azerbaijan
3. Bangladesh
4. Chad
5. Comoros
6. Djibouti
7. Egypt
8. Gambia
9. Jordan
10. Kyrgyz Republic

11. Lebanon
12. Malaysia
13. Mali
14. Morocco
15. Niger
16. Pakistan
17. Palestine
18. Senegal
19. Somalia
20. Uganda
21. Yemen
22. Turkey

OIC Institutions:

1. The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)
2. Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC)
3. Islamic Development Bank (IDB)
4. Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)

Non-Governmental Organisations:

1. Centre for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA)
2. Collective against Islamophobia in France
3. Islamic Community Millî Görüş (IGMG) in Germany
4. Nida Trust in United Kingdom

(The list of participants is attached as Annex 3.)

3. OPENING SESSION

The Workshop was opened with a recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an.

Welcoming remarks and opening statements

- I. The workshop was addressed by Mr. Sayit Yusuf, Deputy President of Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). In his statement, Mr. Sayit Yusuf thanked the participants for accepting the invitation to attend the workshop and he also expressed his satisfaction with the organiser for their effort. He highlighted the importance of the workshop and the need for the Islamic Ummah to have a common unity and voice in addressing the challenges of the Muslims living in the diaspora. Since the end of the Second World War, many people from the Islamic world have moved to different western countries to help

rebuild those countries that were reduced to rubbles by the devastation war. He stated that Turkey is among the countries with a substantial number of a diasporic community, hence the need for the establishment of YTB to help not only address the challenges Turkish diaspora face but also to harness their contributions to the development of their home country. He further expressed that, as Muslims, we need to stand in solidarity and support our brothers and sisters wherever they might live and stem the rising islamophobia and propaganda against Muslims and Islam. He concluded his remarks by offering the willingness of Turkey to cooperate with other OIC member states and share experience and best practices in managing diaspora affairs.

- II. In his opening remarks to the Workshop, H.E. Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya, Director General of SESRIC expressed his delight at the excellent cooperation between the SESRIC and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) in organising the workshop at a time when SESRIC marking a huge milestone in its history with a demonstrated capacity to successfully fulfil its mandate as a subsidiary organ of OIC which was given to it forty years ago.
- III. H.E. Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya also highlighted the historic nature of the movement of people from one place to place which is not a recent phenomenon, particularly for Muslims. Dating back to the Hijrah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from Makkah to Madinah, Muslim migrants have contributed to the spread of not only Islamic values and principles but also knowledge and wisdom across the world.
- IV. H.E. Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya further outlined the commitment of SESRIC to help bring the conversation of the Muslim Diaspora to the forefront and in 2016 SESRIC commissioned the Global Muslim Diaspora Study to Ankara Social Sciences University to analyse challenges, experiences, and perceptions on a range of issues related to Muslim communities living in non-OIC countries. The report also provides a range of useful statistics on the Muslim diaspora, as well as insights on similarities and differences of challenges faced by them in different countries.
- V. In conclusion, Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya expressed the readiness of SESRIC to the implementation of different activities, which we believe will help us make the necessary impact to change some of the issues negatively highlighted in the Global Muslim Diaspora report.
- VI. Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, H.E Amb Umit Yardim, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign of Turkey, stated that the need for coordinated action and joint responsibility by both states and non-states are greater than ever in helping raise awareness on the challenges face by the Muslim diaspora. He

pointed out the recent waves of rising populism and far rights movements in certain European countries that have threatening Muslim communities and immigrants and the increasing attacks on mosques and other places of worship in many countries. He concluded his message by expressing his best wishes to the participants and for the workshop.

Keynote presentation

- VII. After the Welcoming Speeches, Dr. Onur Unutulmaz, Lead Researcher of Global Muslim Diaspora (GMD) Study which is commissioned by SESRIC, delivered the keynote presentation on the preliminary findings of the GMD Study. In his presentation, Dr. Onur Unutulmaz briefed the participants about the aim, methodology and findings of the report at after the first phase which targeted Muslims diaspora in France, UK and Germany. The key objective of the research on GMD is to increase the visibility of the diaspora phenomenon and provide a comprehensive atlas and up-to-date data about the Muslim diaspora. The methodology, according to Dr. Unutulmaz, was a mix between desk research, i.e. literature review and analysis on Diaspora and field research which included interviews, seminars, surveys and workshops to get the latest information and as well hear from the opinions of policy makers and other prominent researchers on the subject. The preliminary research focuses mainly on France, Germany and the UK which are the top three destinations for many Muslim immigrants and diaspora. The reasons according to the research can be dated back to the aftermath of the Second World War when many young Muslim mainly from Turkey moved to Germany to help rebuild the country. The colonial legacies can also be attributed to the high concentrations of Muslima diaspora in this country. After the disintegration of the British empire and the collapsed of colonial rule, many former colonies moved to UK and France in particular in search of better education and living standard.
- VIII. The biggest challenges of the Muslim diaspora, according to the findings of the study are racism and Islamophobia which has been on the rise in recent years, fuelled by the anti-immigration and anti-Muslim politicians who are gaining political amid rising populism. The report finds out that London is comparatively freer and accommodative to Muslim compare to Paris which is one of the most difficult places for Muslims due to the principle of Republican values and secularism. While the study also found a lot of optimism among young Muslims in London, Berlin and Paris about the prospect for Muslims to live in a dignified and free live it these cities in the near future, it also receives lot of pessimism among many Muslims highlighting the complexities of the lives of many Muslims diaspora in Europe.
- IX. As for the advantages, 72.7% of London respondents indicate the religious and cultural freedom as the main advantages of living in the United Kingdom. In Berlin, for example,

situation is different, where almost three-quarters of respondents (62.3% in total) indicate the welfare state and economic prosperity as the main advantages of living in Germany.

- X. The study offers broad and tangible policy recommendations to countries in order to better tackle the challenges of Muslim Diaspora. The recommendations include among things to strengthening the Sense of Unity amongst Members of the Global Muslim Diaspora; engage all stakeholders in both the countries of origin and countries of living for the Diaspora to better formulate policies that can improve dialogue and understanding in the discussion of racism and islamophobia. It also recommends the OIC and her institutions to advance the issue of the Muslima Diaspora in all international platforms and also help preserve the Islamic values and principles.

4. WORKING SESSIONS

The workshop was held over two days. The first day was composed of working sessions focusing on one key aspect of the Muslim Diaspora issue. Each working session was followed by a Q&A session. Working sessions served a broader framework, setting the tone of the workshop. Day two was composed of presentations by national institutions relating to Diaspora and civil society organizations active in the field of Muslim Diaspora. In the closing session that was in the form of a brainstorming session, all participants were able to formulate and suggest the ways in which intra-OIC collaboration can be improved and actions that can be taken to improve the status of Muslim Diasporic communities. The workshop concluded with recommendations for member states on better managing the challenges and prospect of the diaspora issue.

Working Session 2: Muslim Diaspora in Figures and Data

Presenter: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gürol Baba, Researcher of GMD

The Muslim population is the fastest growing in the world. At the current rate of Muslims populations' growth, it is projected that it will grow more than twice as fast as the overall world population between 2015 and 2060 and, in the second half of this century; Islam will likely be the world's largest religious group. In Europe alone the projection has it that by 2030 Muslims will constitute 8 percent of the European population and for America, this is set to constitute around 2.1 percent of them by 2050. Majority of Muslims in Europe live in France, Germany and the UK which were also the main focus of the first phase of the GMD Report. This growth is accelerated by both higher birth rates among Muslim communities compare to non-Muslims and youthful population. Due to the recent waves of migration and asylum seeking in Europe which comes as a direct impact of the instability in the Middle East, the Muslim population in Europe has increase exponentially.

Overall, Asia has the highest number of Muslim population with more one billion, which constitutes 27.5% of the continents total population and 69.4% of the World Muslim population

had the largest number of Muslims among all continents. Despite its large share of Muslim population, however, in terms of the proportion of Muslims in total population Asia was surpassed by Africa where the percentage of Muslims stood at 43.3 in 2010, with a total Muslim population of 447 million, which made 27.0% of the World Muslim population in the same year. Hosting 2.9% of the World Muslim population which constituted 6.6% of its total population, Europe, on the other hand, had around 49 million Muslims.

In terms of social improvement and wellbeing for Muslims living particularly in Europe, it was found that there has been a marked improvement in term of education and other social indicators. But challenges such as discrimination and Islamophobia still remain very high in many countries hosting Muslim minority. In order to provide summarized information of the main findings of the Global Muslim Diaspora (GMD) study, an interactive platform has been built which consists of an interactive map (geo-chart) and a page for each country. The platform provides up to date data and statistics on Muslim communities, socio-economic status, education, and major figures and institutions serving the Muslim Diasporic community.

Working Session 3: Existing and emerging challenges facing Muslim Diaspora

Presenters:

- Mr. Marwan Muhammad, Statistician, Human Rights Expert, Former Director of the Collective against Islamophobia in France
- Dr. Adil Salahi, Author and Translator

Mr. Marwan Muhammad, Statistician, Human Rights Expert, Former Director of the Collective against Islamophobia in France

When we look at the diaspora, we see immense potentials it has to offer. Their social and economic contributions are immense and are a key economic driving force providing remittances and cultural diversity. In recent years, the process of integration for Muslim diaspora in many European countries including France is working and Muslims diaspora is participating well in the all sections of society including in academia, politics sports, and so on.

Integrating and assimilation have been the main paradigms of the diaspora discussion for the past few years. Integration has different factors and dimensions which Diasporas face at different stages. For Muslims living in France and other Europeans countries, Islamophobia is the biggest issue they face. Islamophobia is not a political or economic issue but a psychological one focusing mainly on hate crime and speeches. For many Frenches, being Muslim contradicts the French ideal just like wearing the headscarf which has been a subject of hot debate in France about how to reconcile it with the French values and cultures. Security dimension is one heavy link to the issue of Islamophobia, many in European countries. The deepest impact of Islamophobia is psychological. Unfortunately, the democratic institutions that are there to protect people, over time use people as scapegoats.

Solutions

- I. We first need to diagnose the problems and try to fix and fix it until it works. This will include collecting the relevant and up-to-date data and measure the impacts of the challenges over time.
- II. Economic and social issues; identify and detect high potentials individual diaspora with to good ideas and give them the right support to bring their ideas to fruition. In France, alone there are 5 thousand businesses created every year, many of which by people of immigrant background.
- III. Own the security discussion; the Muslim diaspora has to own the narrative and speak up for themselves rather than leaving their stories to the western media alone. By owning the story we will present a more accurate narrative.

Dr. Adil Salahi, Author and Translator

The concept of Diaspora refers to the Muslim communities who live outside their countries of origins or ancestry. The Muslim diaspora faces numerous existing and emerging challenges such as:

- I. Loss of first-generation immigrants. They faced the struggle of adopting in their host countries due to various factors such as language barriers, cultural differences and the difficulties of finding a job.
- II. Their counterpart and children and grandchildren who also the second and third generations immigrant are facing the challenge of identity erosion such as losing their mother tongue, cultural identity, ethnic affiliation, food, arts etc. this makes the second generation so disconnect for the origins and the heritage of their families.
- III. Enforce cultural assimilation: many diasporas is forced to abide by certain values and principles that are not necessarily required of them from a legal perspective of is forced on them by the host societies. While multiculturalism and assimilation is an opportunity to the present Islam the way it is when force on people can upset the cultural setup of a society.
- IV. Religious challenges: the Muslim diaspora has no clear and unified leadership and is based on immense sectarianism and fragmentations. This makes it different to come to a common ground and have a stronger voice.
- V. Erosion of moral values: in many societies among the Muslim Diaspora, there is a downward spiral of on the basic values and principle of Islamic. This poses a great challenge in preserving the values of Islam among young Muslims in the diaspora. This has significantly contributed to the challenge of family sustainability and increase in divorce rates
- VI. Islamophobia and discriminations: this perhaps the biggest challenge the Muslim diaspora is facing and is heavy fuel by the media which usually vilify of the Muslim for the security problems of Europe such as terrorist attacks.

- VII. Loss of identity and lack of confidence: due to the stereotypes in society and media, many Muslim diaspora is less confident about associating themselves with their origins and lack the real confidence to face the challenges.
- VIII. Radicalization of youth
- IX. Socioeconomic challenges: lack of job opportunities and workplace discrimination.
- X. Political challenges: poor political representation of Muslims in all aspect of life and decision making in the host countries make it difficult to advance the issue of Muslim Diaspora.

Muslim communities in the Diaspora is like a computer and for a very long time, we have been focusing the on the hardware, such as school masjid and so on. Now we should focus on the software to make our children proud of the things that they go into and do without forgetting their heritage.

Working Session 4: Contribution of the Diaspora to Country of Origin and Host Country

Presenter: Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari, Scholar

The contribution of the Muslim to the Economy, culture, and politics of the UK is unquantifiable. The first Muslim in the UK dates back to the 8th century and since then Muslims have been parts and parcel of British life. And of late, the number of Muslims holding key political posing are increasing, most prominent among them among them are the Home Secretary of the UK and the Mayor of London who are both sons of Pakistani immigrants.

The last census of the UK shows that the number of Muslims has been on the rise. The majority of them are of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian origin. Many of the Muslims population are of young people and this is a huge demographic asset for not only Muslim but for the host communities as it provided the necessary labour supply to keep the economy moving. This also comes with huge challenges, such as unemployment and youth radicalization. Among the biggest challenges Muslim Diaspora are facing in the UK is Islamophobia which is real and especially in the media both print and electronic.

Working Session 5: Presentations by Member Countries' Diaspora Authorities

Chaired by Mr. Sayit Yusuf, Deputy President of Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), the session aimed to give participants an opportunity to share experiences and challenges on Diaspora and their activities and policies, especially those that address Diasporic communities' problems both within host countries and countries of origin.

Turkey: In the 1950s after the Second World War, many Turks moved to Europe particularly Germany to help countries devastated by the war to rebuild. In 2010 the government established the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), as a public institution level under Prime Ministry to coordinate the activities for Turks living abroad. YTB has also

introduced the Diaspora strategy which has 3 areas: manage the affairs of Turks living abroad; develop the services and activities to strengthen closer economic, social and cultural relations; and the international scholarship programme for foreign students to study in Turkey. The scholarship provided foreign students to study in all Turkish universities and in all field.

Afghanistan: Due to security challenges, many Afghan have fled to neighbouring countries and beyond. The first unrest sparked mass movements of people from Afghanistan began in the 1970s after the invasion by the Soviet Union that led many to flee to Pakistan in particular. This was followed by the civil war of the Taliban and the Mujahideen in the 1980s and then the War on Terror in 2001 which brought the downfall of the Taliban government and triggered mass fleeing of people to Pakistan and Iran. The recent wave is the migration to Europe in 2012, and Afghanistan has the second highest number of people in this mass migration after Syria. In 2012 almost half a million of Afghans were living in Europe and 1.4 million in Pakistan alone. The government of Afghanistan has ratified the Migration Affairs committee and has also established the Information Centre for Refugee to help refugee and those in the diaspora wishing to return to have easy access to information and support. The government has also introduced a VAT exemption for internally displaced persons.

Azerbaijan: Following the disintegration and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan became an independent country. But the country still has many of her diaspora living in Russia due to the historical relations. A good of the diaspora also lives in Turkey and other European countries and the United States. The government has many initiatives to support the diaspora for their safety and security through the embassies and the missions abroad.

Bangladesh: Due to limited opportunities at home, many Bangladeshi leave the country to search for better life. The biggest number of Bangladesh diaspora lives in the UK. There is a large Bangladeshi diaspora population in Saudi Arabia, where there are almost 1.2 million. There are also significant migrant communities in various Arab states of the Persian Gulf, particularly the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, where Bangladeshis are mainly classified as foreign workers. The government of Bangladesh sees the diaspora as one the best resources of the country as it does constitute the best educated and highly potential people. The Bangladeshi diaspora faces lot challenges ranging from job discrimination, lack of access to health care to Islamophobia and racism. The governments actively support the diaspora for their safety and protection.

Chad: The recent insurgency of Boko Haram terrorist group and shifting climate patter that has brought drought and food scarcity in the country has contributed to the growing number of the Chadian Diaspora. Historically, Chad has had a big number of diaspora living mainly in France and Saudi Arabia. The challenges the Diaspora of Chad are very similar to rest of other Muslim diaspora which is Islamophobia and racism.

Comoros: Comoros is a small country and as such has a small diaspora compare to other countries. The government through the Ministry of Foreign Affair provides support for the diaspora who mainly live in France and Belgium. The contribution of the diaspora to the economy is very crucial as it one of the sources of foreign exchange.

Gambia: Although the Gambia is a small country with a small population, it has a big diaspora mainly in Europe and North America (Canada and US). The current government that came to power in 2017 has attached great significance to the Gambian diaspora. In 2017 the President of the Gambia declared 17 December 2017-17 January 2018 as the month of the Diaspora to help raise awareness about the issue of the diaspora and further help build bridges. In the government development plan for 2018/2021, the issue of the diaspora has been well placed in the development blueprint to further harness the contribution of the diaspora to the development of the Gambia while providing them the necessary support and protection.

Kyrgyzstan: In 2017 more than 8,000,000 Kyrgyz were living abroad mainly in Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey. There is no institution about the diaspora apart from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The number of the immigrants of Kyrgyzstan is growing annually, and their level of interaction is also soaring. The diaspora is playing a huge role in the economic development of Kyrgyzstan. The government supports the diaspora by providing consular services in many countries and also organizes annual gathering and sport competitions to increase their unity and harmony.

Palestine: We have gone through many challenges and we are still going through many challenges. We don't have clear statistical figures of the number of Palestinians living outside. For the Palestinian Diaspora and refugee, the biggest challenge is access to the country which is extremely difficult as the country is still under constant invasion and occupation by Israel.

Malaysia: The country has population 32 million and 0.9 percent of the population is living abroad. Majority of the Malaysian diaspora lives in Australia, UK, Brunei, China, US and New Zealand. Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the authority responsible for Malaysian abroad with the help of the embassies and foreign missions. Malaysian is a transit and has a tiny minority living abroad.

Mali: More than 4 million Malians according to the estimates live abroad and this number continues to rise on an annual basis. Europe and the US are the major destinations for many Malians but also a whole lot are in Ivory Coast, Ghana and Saudi Arabia. Due to economic and social, security and economic challenges, many are forced to flee the country in search of a better living standard. In recent years, the Diaspora has contributed more than 58 billion dollars in remittance to the economy of Mali which is more than what the country receives in Foreign aid and investment. Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2014 through the government introduced the National Migration Policy to better make migration more sustainable for the development of Mali. The government is trying to make information easy to access, also trying to curb illegal

migration by creating skills and opportunity for young people to live and thrive in Mali. A Social fund has been also created to help in those in the diaspora people coming home to settle easily. In 2015 many Malian youth died in the Mediterranean Sea while trying to illegally reach Europe. In 2016 and 2017 more than 1600 have returned to Mali but the process of integrating them has been a challenge. The government is trying all its best to assist young people to stay and have a better life in Mali

Morocco: The country has a huge size of diaspora. More than 5 million Moroccans are living abroad which is 14 percent of the population. In 2014, the government introduced National Strategic Roadmap for migration which has 3 pillars; to protect and strengthen the diaspora; to protect the Moroccan identity and culture, and boost development programme in establishing a network among the people in the Diaspora.

Niger: The country has experienced insecurity of late due to the Boko Haram insurgency and climate change that has unleashed drought and food insecurity in the Niger. These twin challenges have forced many people to flee the country into neighbouring states. But prior to these problems, many people from Niger have been living abroad. The country has established a good relationship with its Sahel G5 neighbours to try and find a lasting solution to the problems of terrorism and climate change in the region. The government has introduced the Africa Migration Programme with the main aim of enhancing our cooperation and contact with people living abroad. The president has called for a regular meeting and approved dual citizenship rights. It also provides entrepreneurs an easy access for visa facilitation and has further increased the passport validity from 3 to 5 years. The government is also providing investment opportunity for people in the diaspora to invest back and contribute to national development efforts.

Pakistan: We have a huge diaspora mainly in Europe USA and Canada. In total it is estimated that more than 8.5 million people of Pakistani are living abroad mainly in the Middle East. Jobs, better remunerations, education, family reunion, better living and political reasons are the main driving forces for people to leave Pakistan. The government has initiated some policies to protect and manage regular migration. The main aim is to provide Pakistani with opportunities and protection all over the world. In countries where Pakistan has no Embassy or consulate, it has a focal person for the welfare affairs in those countries which are difficult to access. The Pakistani diaspora faces many challenges such as limited access to health care due to expensive or no insurance cover and also difficulties in family reunification which can be a long and difficult process.

Senegal: Inequality and poverty and the deterioration of living conditions and climate change are the main factors driving people out of the country. Senegal is both a host and source country for migration. The government has a national migration policy which is implemented in need of the Senegal Diaspora. The country considers the Diaspora as the 15 district of Senegal to enhance their contribution. The government has entered into many MoUs with certain countries and institutions to provide consular services to Senegalese in the Diaspora. The diaspora plays a huge

role in the economy of Senegal. Almost 44 percent of the Senegalese Diaspora is living in Europe, Italy being the main destination, and the rest are in Spain, Ivory Coast, and the Gambia. The WB estimated that in 2016 the diaspora contributed more than 1.5 billion to the economy of Senegal which is higher than the Foreign Direct Investment the country received that same year. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is spending huge resource both human and capital to satisfy the needs and demands of the Senegalese diaspora. The government organizes meetings and summits to increase the dialogue with the diaspora. The government has also created a fund and investment support for migration close to 3 billion dollars. It has also given priority investment area to allow Senegalese in the diaspora to buy real estate at home.

Uganda: The population of Uganda is 27 million and estimates have it that in 2009 1.5 million are living abroad and the number is increasing yearly. Majority of Ugandan in the diaspora are in the UK, US, UAE, South Africa, and China of late for trade reason. Due to political and socio-economic pressures, many are choosing to leave the country. Additionally, the forces of globalization have fueled the migration trend. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has developed the diaspora policy to help solve some of the challenges the diaspora is facing. It's still in final stage awaiting parliamentary approval with the aim of giving people in the Diaspora a dignify life in the host country and increase their contributions to the development of Uganda. The government also organizes an annual home-based summit to bring on board all to share their challenges and encounters. Policy makers and the diaspora interact to help understand the challenges. The government also uses the occasion to engage and sensitize people about the dangers of human trafficking crime. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and mission abroad work closely to unite and help people in the diaspora to ease some of the challenges they are facing.

Somalia: After more than two decades of civil war, the country is now proudly recovering. Somalis have been traveling for a long time. Majority of Somali diaspora are living in Kenya and Ethiopia; but the government did not consider many of them as diaspora due to their existing roots and connection in these countries. The government sees the diaspora as huge asset and opportunity for the rebuilding of Somalia because the diaspora has the best educated of Somalis. The government of Somali wishes to attract them and benefit from their potential. One of the biggest of the Somali diaspora is the loosing of heritage culture and language. Therefore, we welcome the effort the OIC and her institutions to bring and maintain the Islamic values among the Muslim diaspora.

Yemen: The political crisis between the Houthi rebel back by Iran and the government of Yemen back by Saudi Arabia have pushed many to leave the country. The geographical location of the country makes Yemen a very crucial spot and thereby attracting lots of foreign power seeking to assert their influence in the region. More than 6 million are living abroad and since the civil war broke out the number is taking an upward spiral on a daily basis. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in charge of managing the diaspora affairs. Since the number of Yemenis living abroad is very high and the ministry has limited resources, the ministry establishes a branch office in countries with many Yemeni to provide such as commercial, education and

cultural assistance. This assistance and interaction with the diaspora have eased the communication with the diaspora and provide better communication.

Working Session 6: Brainstorming Session for Intra-OIC cooperation

Moderated by Mr. Mehmet Fatih Serenli, Director of Training and Technical Cooperation Department at SESRIC, this session aimed at exploring ways and means of strengthening cooperation among OIC Member Countries on the issue of Muslim immigration as well as cooperation between OIC Member Countries' national institutions and civil society on the issue of Muslim immigration and identify mechanisms and activities that can strengthen unity and build a strong bond among Diasporic communities across the world.

OIC and her institutions have many initiatives on the issue of the Diaspora. The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) has initiatives to support Muslim communities in non-member countries. Many Muslim communities are lacking behind in education and health and the bank sees the need to help promote and support them. The IDB has been supporting this program. In many categories:

1. Basic service infrastructure
2. Scholarship and community development
3. Capacity development
4. Partnership (co-financing, reverse linkage etc.)

The bank spends billions of dollars on lots of projects through the regional hubs; this includes strategies such as Diaspora sukuk, crowdfunding cooperation and communication. All this is open to Muslim minority living outside the OIC Member States.

In conclusion, all participants recognized the important role of the diaspora play in the development effort of their countries and the challenges they are facing. They further recognized that every person should have the same rights and freedom everywhere they live. The challenges are universal and addressing these challenges such as Islamophobia, biased global media coverage, requires strong coordination and cooperation among member states. Details of the recommendations are available in the Annex.